(b) if so, the details of areas affected by the situation:

(c) the assessed financial loss;

(d) whether Government has put in place effective preventive measures; and

(e) the details of the financial relief provided to the affected farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The recent occurrence of bird-flu in the country was initially confirmed in some areas of Birbhum and Dakshin Dinajpur districts of West Bengal. Subsequently, some areas in 11 other districts of West Bengal, namely Murshidabad, Burdwan, South-24 Parganas, Nadia, Hooghly, Howrah, Coochbehaar, Malda, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia were also found to be infected with the disease.

(c) As per industry information, the ex-arm egg prices suffered a decline ranging from 26% in Delhi to about 42.9% in Kolkata between 7th January and 5th February, 2008. During the same period, ex-farm live bird broiler prices declined from 10.3% in Delhi to 64% in Kolkata. The poultry industry has put the loss due to the current episode of Avian Influenza in West Bengal at Rs. 1500 crore over a period of two months.

(d) The Government of India has advised the states to maintain intensive surveillance, report any unusual mortality promptly and pick up samples for testing for the disease. In order to prevent spread of the diseases to neighbouring states, a poultry depopulated zone up to 5 kms. in the broder districts of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa with West Bengal was also notified.

(e) The affected poultry farmers are given compensation at prescribed rates. As per information receive from the Government of West Bengal, funds to the Rs. 1100.23 lakh have so far been paid as compensation to the affected families up to 02.03.2008 for the birds culled. further, Government of West Bengal has decided to grant an interim relief @ Rs. 500/- peer household. As on 3rd March 16.70 crores has already been disbursed and further disbursement is in progress.

Special packages for farmers of Kerala

*129. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI P. R. RAJAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many special packages have been announced by Government for the farmers of Kerala; and

(b) the details of money and other material distributed by the Centre through the scheme in Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) On 29th September, 2006, Government of India approved a special rehabilitation package amounting to

Rs. 765.24 crore to mitigate the distress of farmers in three indentified suicide prone districts namely, Wayanad, Palakkad and Kasaragod of Kerala. Details of financial assistance provided by the Government of India to Kerala as on 31st January, 2008 under the above mentioned rehabilitation package are as under:

(*Rs. in Crore*)

Identified activities under the package	Releases by Central Govt.
Interest Waiver	109.47
Major and Medium Irrigation	2.72
Seed Replacement Programme	1.32
Horticulture Development	29.39
Micro Irrigation	6.36
Extension Services	1.17
Subsidiary Income	23.27
Prime Minister's National Relief Fund	1.50
TOTAL	175.20

Under Seed Replacement Programme, 15405.50 qtls. of quality seeds have been distributed to the farmers of the three identified district of Kerala involving financial outlay of Rs. 1.32 crore.

Shortage of fertilizers

†*130. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was a shortage of fertilizers for farmers in some States during the last year;

(b) if so, the steps taken to ensure the timely availability of fertilizers to farmers in future;

(c) whether Government is framing new urea policy to meet the shortage of fertilizers; and

(d) if so, whether Government would restart those fertilizer plants which had been closed earlier, alongwith the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) The availability of fertilizers in the country during the last year *i.e.* Kharif 2007 and current Rabi season 2007-08 has been adequate to meet the assessed requirement/sustain sales.

50% of indigenous production of urea is under movement and distribution control of Government. The supply of indigenous urea alongwith adequate and timely imports has ensured adequate availability in each State corresponding to the assessed requirement during the season.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.